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TO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MONROVIA IMMEDIATE
INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 107682

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: OVIP, LI (YOUNG, ANDREW)

SUBJECT:BRIEFING MEMORANDUM FOR AMBASSADOR ANDREW YOUNG'S
VISIT TO MONROVIA, MAY 13-14, 1977

I. SETTING

1. YOU WILL RECEIVE A VERY WARM WELCOME FROM THE LIBERIAN OFFICIALS WHOM YOU WILL SEE DURING YOUR VISIT TO MONROVIA. FOREIGN MINISTER DENNIS HAD HOPED TO MEET WITH YOU BRIEFLY AT ROBERTSFIELD AIRPORT DURING YOUR LAST TRIP THROUGH AFRICA, AND WILL WELCOME THIS OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSIONS WITH YOU. THE LIBERIANS WILL VIEW THIS VISIT AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO FURTHER CEMENT THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES, AND IN PARTICULAR WILL TRY TO ENLIST YOUR SUPPORT FOR FURTHER US DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER ASSISTANCE.
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YOUR VISIT WILL COINCIDE WITH THAT OF GOVERNOR JOHN GILLIGAN, AID ADMINISTRATOR, WHO WILL BE ATTENDING A MEETING OF AID'S AFRICAN MISSION DIRECTORS.

II. BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

1. LIBERIA IS ONE OF OUR OLDEST AND MOST FAITHFUL FRIENDS ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT. FOUNDED BY THE AMERICAN COLONIZATION SOCIETY IN 1822, IT HAS LOOKED EVER SINCE TO THE

UNITED STATES FOR FRIENDSHIP, SUPPORT, AND ASSISTANCE. IT HAS LONG SUPPORTED MANY OF OUR FOREIGN POLICY INITIATIVES, AND HAS ALWAYS PROVED READY TO ASSIST IN PROVIDING ADVICE OR SOUNDING OUT OTHER AFRICAN LEADERS ON OUR BEHALF. OCCASIONAL DIPS IN OUR RELATIONS USUALLY ARE ATTRIBUTABLE TO LIBERIAN SENSITIVITY AND CONCERN THAT WE ARE TAKING THEM FOR GRANTED, NOT ATTACHING SUFFICIENT IMPORTANCE TO OUR RELATIONS. DESPITE LIBERIA'S ALTERNATING FEARS OF US NEGLECT AND DOMINATION, THE SPECIAL TIES BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES ARE REAL AND STRONG.

2. FRIENDSHIP WITH LIBERIA HAS PROVIDED MANY TANGIBLE BENEFITS. LIBERIA PERMITS US TO OPERATE THREE MAJOR COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES ON ITS SOIL--VOA'S AFRICA TRANSMITTERS, ONE OF SEVEN OMEGA NAVIGATION STATIONS WORLDWIDE, AND OUR DIPLOMATIC TELECOMMUNICATIONS RELAY STATION FOR AFRICA. THESE SENSITIVE FACILITIES WOULD BE DIFFICULT IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE TO RELOCATE. THE US PARTICIPATED SUBSTANTIALLY IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF ROBERTSFIELD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AND THE PORT OF MONROVIA. A CLASSIFIED AGREEMENT GIVES THE US ACCESS RIGHTS TO THE ROBERTSFIELD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IN TIME OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY.

3. US BUSINESS INVESTMENTS IN LIBERIA EXCEED \$600
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MILLION, AND THE COUNTRY IS AN IMPORTANT SOURCE OF NATURAL RUBBER AND IRON ORE. MAJOR US INVESTMENT IN LIBERIA DATES BACK TO THE 1920'S WHEN THE US GOVERNMENT ENCOURAGED FIRESTONE TO INVEST IN WHAT IS NOW THE LARGEST SINGLE RUBBER PLANTATION IN THE WORLD. SINCE THAT TIME A NUMBER OF OTHER US BUSINESS FIRMS HAVE MADE SUBSTANTIAL INVESTMENTS IN THE COUNTRY INCLUDING REPUBLIC STEEL, BETHLEHEM STEEL, GOODRICH, UNIROYAL, GETTY ENTERPRISES, AND PAN AMERICAN AIRWAYS. THERE ARE THREE MAJOR US BANKS WITH SUBSIDIARIES IN LIBERIA--CHASE MANHATTAN, CHEMICAL, AND FIRST NATIONAL CITY--AND LIBERIA'S FLAG OF CONVENIENCE FLIES ON MANY AMERICAN-OWNED SHIPS.

4. CONTACTS BETWEEN THE US AND LIBERIA ARE FREQUENT. LAST YEAR, LIBERIAN PRESIDENT WILLIM R. TOLBERT, JR., PAID A STATE VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES, THE ONLY AFRICAN CHIEF OF STATE TO BE SO HONORED DURING OUR BICENTENNIAL YEAR. EARLIER, SECRETARY KISSINGER VISITED MONROVIA WHILE ON HIS FIRST TRIP TO AFRICA.

5. OUR MISSION IN MONROVIA IS THE LARGEST IN AFRICA AND, WITH 200 AMERICANS STATIONED THERE, ONE OF THE LARGEST IN THE WORLD.

III. ISSUES/TALKING POINTS

1. US AID TO LIBERIA. DESPITE THE FACT THAT US ASSISTANCE TO LIBERIA IS THE HIGHEST PER CAPITA IN AFRICA, SOME LIBERIANS STILL FEEL IT IS INADEQUATE. THEY CITE THE CLOSE RELATIONSHIP EXISTING BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES AND STATE THIS SHOULD BE REFLECTED IN LIBERIA'S LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT. IN FACT, WHILE MONROVIA ITSELF LOOKS RATHER TACKY, THE ECONOMY OF THE COUNTRY IS DOING WELL, AND PER CAPITA GDP IS ESTIMATED IN EXCESS OF \$500.

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YOUR TALKING POINTS:

--THE US GOVERNMENT IS PROUD OF ITS ROLE IN LIBERIA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. WE ARE ALWAYS WILLING TO EXAMINE NEW WAYS IN WHICH WE CAN FURTHER ITS DEVELOPMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH OUR CLOSE TIES.

--AS YOU KNOW, THE LEVEL OF US ASSISTANCE TO LIBERIA IS SUBSTANTIAL. IN ADDITION TO OUR AID PROGRAM, US ASSISTANCE INCLUDES A PEACE CORPS PROGRAM WITH WELL OVER 200 VOLUNTEERS, SECURITY ASSISTANCE, CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IMPLEMENTED BY A FOUNDATION IN MONROVIA, AND OTHER MEASURES.

--GOVERNOR GILLIGAN, THE NEW AID ADMINISTRATOR, IS PRESENTLY WITH ME IN MONROVIA ATTENDING AN AFRICA-WIDE MEETING OF AID MISSION DIRECTORS. YOU MAY WISH TO ADDRESS SPECIFIC INQUIRIES TO HIM.

2. MILMISH. LIBERIA IS ONE OF TWO COUNTRIES IN SUB-SAHARA AFRICA WHICH HAS A US MILITARY ASSISTANCE ADVISORY GROUP (MAAG), SOMETIMES CALLED MILMISH. RECENT LEGISLATION BY CONGRESS HAS CALLED FOR THE TERMINATION OF ALL MAAG'S WORLDWIDE BY SEPTEMBER 30 EXCEPT WHERE SPECIFICALLY AUTHORIZED. HOWEVER, THE ADMINISTRATION HAS SUBMITTED LEGISLATION TO EXTEND THE LIFE OF A NUMBER OF THESE MAAG'S INCLUDING MILMISH. AS OF THIS WRITING, THE HOUSE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE HAS VOTED TO CUT MILMISH ENTIRELY WHEREAS THE SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON FOREIGN ASSISTANCE HAS VOTED-THE-OPPOSITE.

RECENTLY, WORD THAT MILMISH MIGHT BE TERMINATED HAS REACHED LIBERIAN OFFICIALS WHO HAVE SIGNALLED THEIR STRONG OBJECTION.

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YOUR TALKING POINTS(IF ASKED)

--THE FUTURE OF MILMISH AND OUR OTHER MAAG'S WORLDWIDE IS PRESENTLY BEING DEBATED IN CONGRESS. WHILE WE HAVE TAKEN A STAND IN SUPPORT OF THE RETENTION OF MILMISH, IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO PREDICT THE ULTIMATE OUTCOME OF THE PENDING LEGISLATION.

--IF THIS PENDING LEGISLATION SHOULD FAIL, THERE ARE ALSO BILLS IN BOTH HOUSES OF CONGRESS WHICH WOULD PERMIT THE ASSIGNMENT OF UP TO SIX MILITARY PERSONNEL TO A SUCCESSOR MISSION IN LIBERIA. THE FUNCTIONS PRESENTLY CARRIED OUT BY THE NINE MEMBERS OF MILMISH COULD BE SUBSTANTIVELY PERFORMED BY THESE SIX.

3. LIBERIA'S HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD. LIBERIA'S HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD IS RATHER GOOD, PARTICULARLY IN THE AFRICAN CONTEXT. ITS CONSTITUTION AND THE INCORPORATED BILL OF RIGHTS ARE PATTERNED ON THOSE OF THE US. THE CONSTITUTION GUARANTEES FREEDOM OF RELIGION, ASSEMBLY, SPEECH, AND PRESS; FREEDOM FROM SLAVERY AND SEARCH WITHOUT WARRANT; AND THE RIGHTS OF TRIAL BY JURY, DUE PROCESS, AND HABEAS CORPUS. THESE RIGHTS ARE GENERALLY RESPECTED. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS OR BLATANT HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES.

OUTSIDE CRITICISMS OF LIBERIA'S HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD USUALLY CENTER ON ITS BEING A ONE-PARTY STATE (ALTHOUGH OPPOSITION PARTIES ARE NEITHER OUTLAWED NOR SUPPRESSED) AND ON CERTAIN ABUSES WHICH OCCURRED DURING THE 1960'S UNDER THE LATE PRESIDENT TUBMAN. THE LIBERIANS ARE VERY SENSITIVE ABOUT CRITICISMS OF WHAT THEY FEEL IS AN EXCELLENT RECORD, AND FOREIGN MINISTER DENNIS CRITIQUED THE DEPARTMENT'S REPORT WHEN IT WAS MADE PUBLIC.

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YOUR TALKING POINTS:

--LIBERIA'S HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD IS VERY GOOD. DEMOCRACY HAS DEEP ROOTS IN LIBERIA, AND WE HOPE ITS EXAMPLE CAN BE EMULATED BY OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD.

--WE UNDERSTAND THIS IS A SENSITIVE ISSUE, AND APPRECIATED THE CLARIFICATIONS PROVIDED BY FOREIGN MINISTER DENNIS FOLLOWING PUBLICATION OF OUR HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT TO THE CONGRESS ON LIBERIA.

4. LIBERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY. LIBERIA'S VOTING RECORD

IN INTERNATIONAL FORA IS CLOSER TO WHAT WE HOLD IDEAL THAN THAT OF ANY OTHER COUNTRY ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT. WHILE JEALOUS OF ITS INDEPENDENCE AND FREEDOM OF DECISION, LIBERIA GENERALLY RENDERS SUPPORT ON MATTERS OF IMPORTANCE TO THE US. A RECENT EXAMPLE WAS LIBERIA'S RESERVATION FOLLOWING THE APRIL FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING OF NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES IN NEW DELHI TO A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE "STRUGGLE" OF THE PEOPLE OF PUERTO RICO FOR INDEPENDENCE.

ON SOUTHERN AFRICAN ISSUES, PRESIDENT TOLBERT HAS TAKEN A MODERATE POSITION. AN ORDAINED MINISTER, HE ABHORS VIOLENCE AND FEELS THAT A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO THESE PROBLEMS SHOULD BE PURSUED IF AT ALL FEASIBLE. HE SEES HIMSELF AS A MEDIATOR, AND PROFESSES WILLINGNESS TO TALK TO ALL PARTIES IN A DISPUTE. IN FACT, SEVERAL YEARS AGO HE TOOK THE CONTROVERSIAL STEP OF RECEIVING SOUTH AFRICAN PRIME MINISTER VORSTER IN MONROVIA TO DISCUSS SOUTHERN AFRICA ISSUES. HE HAS ALSO STATED, HOWEVER, THAT IF THE OAU WERE TO CONCLUDE IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO ACHIEVE A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF THESE PROBLEMS, HE WOULD RELUCTANTLY ACCEDE TO SUPPORTING ALTERNATIVE MEASURES.

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WE WOULD LIKE TO REMIND THE LIBERIANS OF THE IMPORTANCE WE ATTACH TO THE COMING ILO GENERAL CONFERENCE IN JUNE.

YOUR TALKING POINTS:

--WE GREATLY APPRECIATE THE SUPPORT WE RECEIVE FROM LIBERIA ON ISSUES OF INTEREST TO US. WE WELCOME LIBERIA'S ADVICE ON THESE ISSUES AND WE HOPE OUR TWO COUNTRIES WILL BE ABLE TO WORK TOGETHER TO HELP RESOLVE THE DIFFICULT PROBLEMS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA. (YOU MAY WISH TO BRIEF THE LIBERIANS ON US-UK AND CONTACT GROUP ACTIVITIES RESPECTIVELY ON THE RHODESIAN AND NAMIBIA QUESTIONS PER USUN 1473.)

--WE APPRECIATE THE RESERVATIONS LIBERIA ENTERED TO THE UNWARRANTED LANGUAGE ON PUERTO RICO ADOPTED AT THE NEW DELHI FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING.

-- THE OUTCOME OF THE ILO CONFERENCE IS IMPORTANT TO OUR CONTINUED PARTICIPATION IN THE ILO. WE LOOK TO AFRICAN STATES FOR SUPPORT IN MAINTAINING THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF THE ILO AND ADHERENCE TO ITS RULES OF PROCEDURE. (SEE STATE CABLES 102699, 103403, AND 103404.) CHRISTOPHER

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